

# State Elections Enforcement Commission

## Citizens' Election Program



### Press Release

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### STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION ANNOUNCES FIRST PUBLIC GRANTS OF ELECTION SEASON

HARTFORD, CT – May 25, 2016 – The State Elections Enforcement Commission (the “Commission”) announced that it will make its first public grant payments under the Citizens’ Election Program (“CEP”) for the August 9, 2016 primaries and the November 8, 2016 general election. The Commission determined that state representative candidates Charles Ferraro (R– 117<sup>th</sup> District) and Matthew Ritter (D – 1<sup>st</sup> District) were eligible to receive Program grants.

The CEP is a voluntary program which allows qualifying candidates for General Assembly and statewide offices to receive full public financing. To qualify for public campaign financing, candidates must demonstrate they have adequate support from the public. Candidates for state representative accomplish this by raising \$5,000 from at least 150 individuals residing in municipalities in their district. Candidates for state senate accomplish this by raising \$15,000 from at least 300 individuals residing in municipalities in their district. Participating candidates may only accept small dollar contributions from certain individuals—the maximum contribution is \$100—and no contributions from state contractors or PACs. In 2016, general election grant amounts are \$28,150 for state representative candidates. The Commission will be accepting applications from candidates in primaries until July 15<sup>th</sup> and from candidates in the general election until October 14<sup>th</sup>.

Since it was enacted, the CEP has considerably altered the electoral process. The CEP set off a sweeping change in the way candidates raise campaign funds by reducing the influence of large contributions and shifting the goals of campaign fundraising towards small dollar contributions from actual people, rather than special interests. Candidates no longer require access to personal wealth or the support of special interests, like state contractors, lobbyists, businesses, unions or PACs. Today, Connecticut candidates can mount successful campaigns solely relying on the support of individuals in their community.

Now in its fifth full election cycle, the CEP represents an important effort to restore the public’s trust in the institutions of democratic governance.

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